

Subject: Position Description, Guidelines for Writing, Compliance With ADA, and Personnel Transaction Requests

For: EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Also See:

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	Bulletin
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Position Descriptions (PDs)

Office of Human Resources (HR) maintains a completed form CS-214 POSITION DESCRIPTION (PD) on file for each classified position. PDs explain reporting relationships, work unit objectives, job duties and responsibilities, working conditions and any education or training required. Blank CS-214 forms are available in HR or can be found on the Department of Civil Service Web site.

Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that PDs are reviewed and updated every two years to show current duties and responsibilities for each supervised position. If job duties have changed or increased significantly, employees may initiate an updated PD; however, supervisors must also review the PD and complete their part.

All forms 1868 PERSONNEL TRANSACTION REQUEST submitted to HR should be accompanied by a new or updated PD on form CS-214: (1) to establish a new position, (2) to fill a vacancy if duties for position have changed significantly, (3) to reclassify a current employee, or (4) if the current PD is more than two years old. Blank 1868's are available in HR and on Treasury's Intranet at <http://intra.state.mi.us/treasury/Forms/HR/1868.pdf>.

Use All Available Resources

When preparing a new CS-214, obtain a copy of the previous PD for the job if it has previously been established. From this, you can determine if the job has changed and how.

Review a copy of Civil Service class specifications (available on the Department of Civil Service Web site) which describe, in general terms, the work typically performed within a particular classification. You may find some terminology in the specification that you can use in your PD to describe the job.

Contact your supervisor or HR to obtain clarification on specific questions regarding the job or the PD itself.

Plan and Organize Duties and Responsibilities

Determine all significant functions of the job and describe them in order of importance. The percentage of time spent on each job function should help determine the importance of the job function to the position.

Carefully answer questions that pertain to guidelines used, examples of decision-making as they may be given significant weight when the PD is evaluated for a job's difficulty or responsibility. The CS-214 provides detailed instructions for completing the form.

Write Clearly and Use Plain (Nontechnical) Language

A good position description explains the objectives, duties and responsibilities of a job so precisely that they are understandable to everyone.

1. **Start each sentence with an active, present-tense verb in describing the separate duties of a job.** For example, “**Audits** tax returns for compliance to tax **statutes**” or “**Prepares and maintains** office records.”
2. **Avoid the narrative form.** Write a PD, not a story. When possible, eliminate adjectives (such as competent, aggressive) and articles (a, an, the). State what is done, not how it is done.
3. **Be concise.** Describe the duties and responsibilities as directly and simply as possible. Don’t clutter up the description with needless, repetitive details. The length of a job description does not increase the importance or complexity of the job.
4. **Avoid fuzzy language.** Be precise in defining actual responsibility. An expression like “assist in” or “participate in” does not define the extent of that involvement or the position’s level of responsibility in that activity.
5. **Refer to job titles rather than people.** For example, “Report to Director of Office of Human Resources” instead of “Report to Joe Smith.”
6. **Do not refer to any personal or physical characteristics (e.g., sex, race, religion, handicap or disability, etc.) as criteria for qualifying or not qualifying for a job.** Do not portray any individual in an offensive or demeaning manner. Focus only on job functions and responsibilities.

Example: If position requires a lot of heavy lifting, pushing, stooping, climbing and carrying, do not list desirable physical characteristics or make a statement that handicappers are not qualified for the position.

7. **Item 23 Essential Duties.** Refer to duties previously entered in Item 15. Determine which of these duties (e.g., Duty 1, 2, 3, etc.) **must** be performed (with or without accommodations) and **cannot** be eliminated from the position and enter these here (for example, Duties 1, 2, 4). Include brief explanation as to why the duties selected are essential and the consequences if duty is eliminated from the position. At the beginning of this section, enter “Includes all requirements identified in Section 18 of the position description.”

Examples: Duty 4 involves ability to communicate with taxpayers in writing (10% of time) and Duty 5 involves ability to communicate verbally with taxpayers (10% of time). A job interviewee or employee is not able to communicate verbally and makes a request that Duty 5 be eliminated from position and given to another employee in exchange for more Duty 4 work. If this request can easily be accommodated, then Duties 4 and 5 are not essential and should not be listed as an essential duty.

Duty 3 involves telephone call to/from taxpayers (50% of time). A job interviewee or employee is hearing impaired and makes a request that Duty 3 be eliminated. If Duty 3 cannot be eliminated from the position (see criteria below), then it **is** essential and must be listed as an essential duty.

Criteria for determining whether a job is essential include:

- Position exists to perform a very specific duty.
- There are a limited number of employees available to perform the duty or among whom the duty can be distributed.
- Duty is highly specialized and requires special expertise or ability to perform the duty.

Evidence of an essential job duty includes:

- Employer's judgment as to whether job duty is essential.
- Amount of time spent performing the duty.
- Consequences of not requiring employee to perform duty.
- Terms of a collective bargaining agreement.
- Work experience of employees who performed duty in the past or who currently perform similar duties.

In identifying an essential job duty, focus on the **purpose** of the job duty and the **result** to be accomplished, rather than **how** the job duty is presently performed. Although it may be essential that a duty be performed, frequently it is not essential that it be performed in a particular way.

For further information or assistance, consult the ADA Coordinator at (517) 373-3172.

HR is responsible for ensuring that each PD accurately reflects the position and is in compliance with Civil Service Commission Rules, the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) and other applicable laws.

The PD should clearly state which duties are essential, any physical/mental requirements, working conditions, etc., and should not list physical characteristics as criteria for a job or portray a disabled person in an offensive or demeaning manner.

End